



COLUMBIA HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY MANUAL

TITLE: CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT	GENERAL ORDER NUMBER: 800
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The purpose of this General Order is to establish a procedure for an initial response, investigation, and review of any critical incident involving Columbia Heights Police Department personnel. It is in the best interest of the Department, the public, and the officers involved that a thorough and detailed investigation be conducted into all critical incidents. It is also understood that until and unless otherwise determined by the facts, it shall be presumed that those employees involved in a critical incident acted within the bounds of law, in accordance with Department policy, and in the course and scope of their employment. The Chief shall retain overall command and control of all critical incident investigations, unless otherwise directed by the Chief.

800:1 Definitions

Critical Incident

Any incident involving great bodily harm or death, any incident that represents the potential for significant civil or criminal liability to the employees or the Department, and any incident that might inflict adverse emotional or psychological stress upon the officers involved. Examples of *critical incidents* include, but are not limited to:

- Officer-involved shootings;
- Other incidents involving use of deadly force;
- Vehicle pursuits and other officer-involved actions resulting in great bodily harm or death; and
- Events presenting the risk of significant civil liability.

Phase One – Response

Phase one of this plan shall commence immediately upon determination that a *critical incident* has occurred as defined. *Phase one* of this plan shall not be implemented prior to the conclusion of an active tactical situation. The objectives of *phase one* shall be to effectively

manage the scene of the *critical incident*, to identify and provide for any medical or other special needs, and to preserve the integrity of all types of available evidence to facilitate a comprehensive investigation.

Phase Two – Investigation

Phase two of this plan shall commence when the *critical incident* scene has been stabilized. The objectives of *phase two* are to provide for an orderly and coordinated approach to managing the investigative, human, and community elements of a *critical incident*.

Phase Three – Review

Phase three of this plan shall commence upon completion of the active investigation of the *critical incident*. The objectives of *phase three* of this plan are to provide for fair and effective analysis and review of *critical incidents*, to maintain the Department's accountability to the public, and to return the Department and officers to pre-incident modes of operations.

800:2 Phase One – Review**800:21 Initial Action of Officers Directly Involved**

Those officers directly involved in the incident shall assess the situation and make a brief preliminary radio broadcast advising Anoka County Dispatch and fellow officers of the situation. This initial broadcast shall include essential and necessary information that will assist backup personnel to respond appropriately. Requests for support personnel that are needed on an emergency basis such as ambulance, rescue, or fire, shall be included in this initial broadcast.

800:211

Once the support personnel have been requested, officers are to ensure that the shift supervisor has been notified.

800:212

Police administration and BCA shall be requested to respond to the scene. At the discretion of the Chief or Captain, CID may be used in lieu of the BCA.

800:213

Officers directly involved in the incident shall not discuss the incident with anyone at the scene who is not officially involved in the incident or its investigation, except for officer safety purposes. Officers shall not make spontaneous statements to anyone, as such statements are likely to either complicate or compromise the investigation.

800:214

If the critical incident is an officer-involved shooting, those officers who discharged their weapon shall retain their weapon until it is turned over to a supervisor. Unless necessary for officers' safety, officers shall not reload or unload their weapons without being instructed to do so by a supervisor.

800:215

Officers directly involved in the critical incident shall not become involved in the gathering or collection of evidence, or the interviewing of witnesses. Those officers shall remain at the scene until the supervisor arrives, unless they are in need of emergency treatment, or other exigent circumstances exist.

800:22 Initial Action of Backup Officers

Officers responding to the scene of a critical incident shall do so as quickly and safely as possible. The type of response shall be dictated by the situation.

800:221

The first priority of the initial backup officers shall be the safety and well-being of the officers involved, other involved parties, and the members of the public who are present at the scene. Once this is accomplished, the backup officers shall ensure the scene is protected. The scene shall be as large as is needed to protect the integrity of the investigation. An inner and outer perimeter shall be established.

800:222

Officers who may have been involved in the initial incident shall be relieved from whatever duties they may be performing. This could include relieving officers from rendering first aid, crowd control, scene perimeter, etc.

800:23 Actions by Supervisor

Once advised that an officer has been involved in a critical incident, the shift supervisor shall use the SAC concept described below to contain, control, and coordinate the overall incident.

SAC Concept:

S - Scene Control and Containment

A - Administrative Requirement

C - Criminal Aspects of the Incident

800:231

Scene Control and Containment:

- Re-establish the safety and well-being of all persons involved;

- Re-examine the scene and perimeter, and make certain that it is properly established and maintained to protect the scene and preserve evidence;
- Assess the need for additional personnel or equipment;
- Notify necessary personnel. The supervisor shall contact the Captain, who shall in turn notify the Chief.
- Restrict entrance to the scene to only necessary authorized persons;
- Establish a system for logging entry into the inner perimeter. The logging officer shall be a uniformed officer whose sole function shall be to log in and log out everyone who enters and exits the inner perimeter. The log shall include the following:
 - Name, rank, and agency of personnel entering;
 - Date, time in, time out;
 - Purpose of entering the inner perimeter; and
 - Location visited.
- Survey the incident to assist responding detectives;
- Restrict the news media from the scene until the designated Public Information Officer is present; and
- Release unnecessary police personnel at the scene as soon as practical.

800:232**Administrative Requirements:**

- Move any involved officer(s) to the police facility as soon as possible. An uninvolved officer shall be assigned to transport the involved officer(s), and shall remain to provide assistance to the involved officer(s);
- Instruct the involved officer(s) not to talk with any person other than the assigned detective, labor representative, or personal support person;
- No detailed statements or reports shall be taken or prepared until the officers have the opportunity to consult with an attorney if they choose to do so. Thereafter, the officers shall prepare a

written report regarding the incident within seventy-two (72) hours, if able;

- Make certain that the officers involved are able to contact their families, or make other significant notifications as they may wish;
- Request a copy of the tape recording from Anoka County Dispatch of all radio broadcasts associated with the incident;
- Obtain any weapon that has been discharged as part of a critical incident. If the discharge involves a handgun, the supervisor shall also collect the officer's magazines. This shall normally be done at the Department so that officers are not unarmed while on the street. If necessary, a supervisor on the scene may procure the weapon and magazines from the officers on the scene. The supervisor shall document the chain of custody of the weapon. The supervisor shall turn the weapon over to a crime lab officer;
- Unless otherwise ordered by the Chief, officers relinquishing their weapons shall be furnished with a Department-issued weapon and ammunition as soon as practical. The supervisor or designee shall issue the new weapon;
- Pursuant to General Order 904, as soon as practical but without unreasonable delay, the officer involved shall be transported to a medical facility where samples of blood and or urine will be taken for analysis. The analysis will determine the presence and level of any alcohol or drugs. These samples shall be retained by the accompanying or investigating detective, and handled in a routine evidentiary manner; and
- If one or more officers are injured and transported to a hospital, a minimum of one uniformed officer shall go directly to the hospital to ensure the safety and privacy of the injured officer, and to secure the officer's equipment.

800:233**Criminal Aspects of the Incident:**

- Locate, secure, and if necessary, transport from the scene any person(s) suspected of being involved in any criminal aspect of the incident;
- If suspects are taken to a hospital, assign an officer or officers to accompany them, and to remain with them at the hospital;
- Ensure that all evidence is preserved and safeguarded in its current location;
- Identify witnesses, and ensure that they are secluded and controlled; and
- Initiate all necessary criminal alerts, if warranted.

800:3 Phase Two – Investigation**800:31 Criminal Investigation****800:311 Criminal Investigation by an Outside Agency**

- The criminal investigation of a critical incident shall be conducted by an outside agency; and
- When the Chief has ordered that an outside agency conduct the investigation, the investigative supervisor shall act as the Department liaison with that agency. All requests for information, access to involved officers, or use of resources and equipment made by the investigating agency shall be made through the investigative supervisor. The investigative supervisor shall ensure full cooperation exists between the agencies.

800:312 Administrative Investigation

A comprehensive administrative investigation shall be conducted at the direction of the Chief. This investigation

shall be in accordance with Department policy and practice, and shall be conducted on all critical incidents involving Department personnel. Criminal investigations of critical incidents shall take priority, and shall be conducted before the required administrative investigation.

800:32 Support of Involved Officers**800:321 Policy**

The primary purpose of this Department following the occurrence of a critical incident shall be to implement a full and impartial investigation aimed at discovering and preserving all facts surrounding the incident. It shall be the policy of this Department to conduct the investigation in a manner that does not further traumatize the involved officer while permitting the Department to fulfill its investigative responsibility. It shall be the policy of this Department to take such steps as may be necessary to assist the officers in their recovery from any psychological trauma occasioned by the event.

800:322 Definitions**Critical Incident Stress Debriefing**

A critical incident stress debriefing is a formal group discussion provided 24 to 72 hours after an incident. The debriefing is a psychological and educational procedure conducted to lessen the impact of a critical incident and accelerate normal recovery, in normal people, having normal reactions to abnormal events. Information acquired by peer group members in a public safety peer counseling debriefing is private data.

Critical Incident Defusing

Critical incident defusing is an informal process that takes place immediately post critical incident. It involves employees, supervisors, and a representative of the Critical incident Stress Management Team. This process focuses on immediate reaction and education of those involved

in a critical incident. Team members may distribute material to those involved.

Anoka County Public Safety Peer Support

The Anoka County Public Safety Peer Support team is a group of trained volunteers that respond to assist with peer support, crisis intervention, and critical incident stress management in the metropolitan area. The ACPC Team conducts defusing, debriefing, demobilization, and on-site stress management.

Immediate Family Members

Immediate family members include the employee's spouse, significant other, child, or step-child.

Involved Employee

An involved employee is an employee of the Columbia Heights Police Department, or Department support personnel that are directly or indirectly involved in a critical incident. This includes but is not limited to police officers, communications personnel, community service officers, support services personnel, reserves, civilian volunteers, chaplains, and police student interns.

800:323 Reporting and Responsibilities

800:3231 Initial Action of Duty

Sergeant

The duty sergeant shall determine if an event is a critical incident as defined by this policy. Through knowledge of the incident, observation of and discussion with involved employees, the duty sergeant will assess whether or not involved employees will be granted immediately leave from the work place, or continue their respective shifts. Occurrences determined to be critical incidents are to be reported immediately to police administration.

The Chief or designee may grant employees demonstrating an emotional reaction to the incident administrative leave up to three working days in length.

The Chief may extend administrative leave for up to two weeks in duration. Employees seeking administrative leave beyond three days must be engaged in a treatment or counseling program intended to alleviate the effects of the critical incident upon the employee.

800:3232 Sergeants' Documentation

In addition to immediate notification of the Chief and Captain, the duty sergeant shall prepare written documentation of the incident and immediate supervisory actions prior to completion of the work shift. This report may be a narrative supplemental report or, in the absence of a narrative, a memorandum to the Chief.

800:2233 Chief/Captain Responsibilities

The Chief or Captain may order an immediate critical incident defusing. Additionally, the Chief or Captain may order a critical incident debriefing. This debriefing may be arranged through the Anoka County Peer Counseling team. All such debriefings shall occur as soon as possible, but no later than 72 hours after the incident. The Chief retains the authority to require attendance by employees involved in a critical incident. Employees required or electing to attend defusing or debriefing shall be compensated in accordance with contract language or City Personnel Rules and Regulations as appropriate.

800:324 Extending Services to Family

Critical incidents not only affect the employee, but immediate family members as well. If requested, and at the Chief's

discretion, the Police Department may assist with arranging professional counseling and follow-up care by an experienced psychologist or mental health professional for immediate family members affected by the aftermath of the incident.

800:325 Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome Benefit

Minnesota State Statute 299A.411 requires law enforcement agencies to provide certain benefits to officers that have been clinically diagnosed as suffering from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder as a result of the lawful taking of a life and are unable to perform other peace officers job duties provided by the employer.

Officers involved in incidents covered by this legislation will be afforded the benefits as required by State Statute.

800:326 Psychological Counseling

Psychological counseling may be required for all involved officers in a critical incident. The counseling may include both a fitness-for-duty assessment and confidential therapeutic follow up and support. The Chief or designee may make arrangements for each involved officer to meet with a licensed mental health care professional for the fitness-for-duty assessment as soon as is practical after the incident. The Chief or designee may make arrangements for therapeutic follow up and support.

800:327 Administrative Leave

Whenever an officer causes the death of another person, the officer shall be placed on administrative leave for a minimum of three (3) days following the incident. The officer shall remain available during normal business hours, and shall be available to assist detectives during this period, if needed.

After receiving a fitness-for-duty assessment report from the mental health professional, the officer shall normally be assigned to non-enforcement duties pending the completion of the administrative review of the incident.

800:328 Return to Work

Employees placed on leave following involvement in the critical incident may be required to meet with an experienced psychologist or mental health professional to assure that the employee is prepared for return to work.

800:34 Media Relations

A critical incident generates widespread public attention, and special steps shall be taken to disseminate public information in a timely manner. Through the Chief or Public Information Officer, the Columbia Heights Police Department shall take the initiative to inform news media outlets of critical incidents whenever possible. Regular news briefings shall be scheduled at the scene of the incident. A staging area for the media shall be designated. Written news releases shall be distributed to all news agencies to cover those who cannot be at the scene of the incident. The names of the officers involved in a critical incident shall be released in a reasonable amount of time. Any media inquiries shall be handled by the Public Information Officer, or the designated spokesperson.

800:4 Phase Three – Review

800:41 Administrative Review

When a critical incident occurs, the Chief shall direct an examination of the incident by the critical incident review panel. Assisting the board in an ad hoc capacity shall be the investigative supervisor. The investigative supervisor shall gather all pertinent documentation related to the incident to include, but not be limited to the following:

- All Department reports related to the incident, including initial investigative reports;
- All documentation related to the incident prepared by other agencies;
- Any other investigative reports;
- Policy governing Department handling of this specific type of incident;
- Established Department standard operating procedures, policies, or guidelines;
- Any state or federal statutes, constitutional law, court rulings, or case law governing conduct by officers related to the specific incident;
- Training records or lesson plans where applicable; and
- Any expert documentation available regarding the incident.

800:411 Panel Review

All materials gathered by the investigative supervisor shall be prepared as a packet and distributed for review by panel members prior to a panel review. During the review, the investigative supervisor shall present all relevant evidence to the panel in a fair and impartial manner. The investigative supervisor shall not vote, be present during deliberations or voting by the panel, nor confer about the incident outside the presence of the full panel with any members of the panel once proceedings have convened.

800:412

The panel shall be responsible for a comprehensive review of the incident including the actions of the involved

Department member, the broad scope of police practice during the event, the adherence to Department policy, as well as the adequacy of Department training, equipment, and policy.

800:413

The primary purpose of the administrative review shall be to enhance the future level of performance of Department members by identifying recommended improvements in tactics, training, equipment, and policy.

800:42 Reporting Requirement

The panel shall prepare a report evaluating the response to the incident. The report shall be forwarded to the Chief. The report shall record findings of fact, and provide a conclusion. The conclusion of the report shall include both an evaluation of the response to the incident, and recommendations for improving training, equipment, and policy that hindered the response to the incident. If cause is established during the course of the review, an internal affairs investigation may be recommended.

BY ORDER OF:

Scott Nadeau, Chief of Police

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